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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

GENERAL WILLIAM O. BUTLER.

BY FRANCIS P. BLAIR.

In memoirs of individuals of distinction it is usual to look back to their ancestry. The feeling is universal which prompts us to learn something of even an ordinary acquaintance in whom interest is felt. It will indulge, therefore, only a natural and proper curiosity to introduce the subject of this notice by a short account of a family whose striking traits survive in him so remarkably.

General BUTLER's grandfather, Thomas Butler, was born 6th April, 1720, in Kilkenny, Ireland. He married there in 1742. Three of his five sons who attained manhood, Richard, William, and Thomas, were born abroad. Pierce, the father of General WILLIAM O. BUTLER, and Edward, the youngest son, were born in Pennsylvania. It is remarkable that all these men, and all their immediate male descendants, with a single exception, were engaged in the military service of this country.

The eldest, Richard, was lieutenant colonel of Morgan's celebrated rifle regiment, and to him it owed much of the high character that gave it a fame of its own, apart from the other corps of the Revolution. The cool, disciplined valor which gave steady and deadly direction to the rifles of this regiment, was derived principally from this officer, who devoted himself to the drill of his men. He was promoted to the full command of a regiment sometime during the war, and in that capacity commanded Wayne's left in the attack on Stony Point. About the year 1790, he was appointed major general. On the 4th of November, 1791, he was killed in General St. Clair's bloody battle with the Indians. His combat with the Indians, after he was shot, gave such a peculiar interest to his fate, that a representation of himself and the group surrounding him, was exhibited throughout the Union in wax figures. Notices of this accomplished soldier will be found in Marshall's *Life of Washington*, pages 290, 311, 420. In General St. Clair's report, in the *American Museum*, vol. xi. page 44, Appendix.

William Butler, the second son, was an officer throughout the revolutionary war; rose to the rank of colonel, and was in many of the severest battles. He was the favorite of the family, and was boasted of by this race of heroes as the coolest and boldest man in battle they had ever known. When the army was greatly reduced in rank and file, and there were many superfluous officers, they organized themselves into a separate corps, and elected him to the command. General Washington declined receiving this novel corps of commissioned soldiers; but in a proud testimonial did honor to their devoted patriotism.

Of Thomas Butler, the third son, we glean the following facts from the *American Biographical Dictionary*. In the year 1776, whilst he was a student of law in the office of the eminent Judge Wilson of Philadelphia, he left his pursuit and

joined the army as a subaltern. He soon obtained the command of a company, in which he continued to the close of the revolutionary war. He was in almost every action fought in the middle States during the war. At the battle of Brandywine he received the thanks of Washington on the field of battle, through his aid-de-camp, General Hamilton, for his intrepid conduct in rallying a detachment of retreating troops, and giving the enemy a severe fire. At the battle of Monmouth he received the thanks of General Wayne for defending a defile, in the face of a severe fire from the enemy, while Colonel Richard Butler's regiment made good its retreat.

At the close of the war he retired into private life, as a farmer, and continued in the enjoyment of rural and domestic happiness until the year 1791, when he again took the field to meet the savage foe that menaced our western frontier. He commanded a battalion in the disastrous battle of November 4, 1791, in which his brother fell. Orders were given by General St. Clair to charge with the bayonet, and Major Butler, though his leg had been broken by a ball, yet, on horseback, led his battalion to the charge. It was with difficulty his surviving brother, Captain Edward Butler, removed him from the field. In 1792 he was continued in the establishment as major; and in 1794 he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel commandant of the 4th sub-legion. He commanded in this year Fort Fayette, at Pittsburg, and prevented the deluded insurgents from taking it, more by his name than by his forces, for he had but few troops. The close of his life was embittered with trouble. In 1803 he was arrested by the commanding general, Wilkinson, at Fort Adams, on the Mississippi, and sent to Maryland, where he was tried by a court-martial, and acquitted of all the charges, save that of *wearing his hair*. He was then ordered to New Orleans, where he arrived, to take command of the troops, October 20th. He was again arrested next month; but the court did not sit until July of the next year, and their decision is not known. Colonel Butler died September 7, 1805. Out of the arrest and persecution of this sturdy veteran, Washington Irving (*Knickerbocker*) has worked up a fine piece of burlesque, in which General Wilkinson's character is inimitably delineated in that of the vain and pompous General Von Poffenburg.

Percival Butler, the fourth son, father of General WILLIAM O. BUTLER, was born at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1760. He entered the army as a lieutenant at the age of eighteen; was with Washington at Valley Forge; was in the battle of Monmouth, and at the taking of Yorktown—being through the whole series of struggles in the middle States, with the troops under the commander-in-chief, except for a short period when he was attached to a light corps, commanded by Lafayette,

who presented him a sword. Near the close of the war, he went to the South with the Pennsylvania brigade, where peace found him. He emigrated to Kentucky in 1784. He was the last of the old stock left when the war of 1812 commenced. He was made adjutant general when Kentucky became a State, and in that capacity joined one of the armies sent out by Kentucky during the war.

Edward Butler, the youngest of the five brothers, was too young to enter the army in the first stages of the Revolution, but joined it near the close, and had risen to a captaincy when General St. Clair took the command, and led it to that disastrous defeat in which so many of the best soldiers of the country perished. He there evinced the highest courage and strongest fraternal affection, in carrying his wounded brother out of the massacre, which was continued for miles along the route of the retreating army, and from which so few escaped, even of those who fled unencumbered. He subsequently became adjutant general in Wayne's army.

Of these five brothers, four had sons, all of whom, with one exception, were engaged in the military or naval service of the country during the last war.

1st. General Richard Butler's son, William, died a lieutenant in the navy, early in the last war. His son, Captain James Butler, was at the head of the Pittsburg Blues, which company he commanded in the campaigns of the northwest, and was particularly distinguished in the battle of Massissinawa.

2d. Colonel William Butler, also of the revolutionary army, had two sons: one died in the navy, the other a subaltern in Wayne's army. He was in the battle with the Indians in 1794.

3d. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Butler, of the old stock, had three sons, the eldest a judge. The second, Colonel Robert Butler, was at the head of General Jackson's staff throughout the last war. The third, William E. Butler, also served in the army of General Jackson.

4th. Percival Butler, captain in the revolutionary war, and adjutant general of Kentucky during the last war, had four sons: first, Thomas, who was a captain, and aid to General Jackson at New Orleans; next, General WILLIAM O. BUTLER, the subject of this notice; third, Richard, who was assistant adjutant general in the campaigns of the war of 1812; Percival Butler, the youngest son, now a distinguished lawyer, was not of an age to bear arms in the last war. Of the second generation of the Butlers, there are nine certainly, and probably more, engaged in the present war.

This glance at the family shows the character of the race. An anecdote, derived from a letter of an old Pennsylvania friend to the parents, who transplanted it from Ireland, shows that its military instinct was an inheritance. "While the five sons," says the letter, "were absent from home in the service of the country, the old father took it in his head to go also. The neighbors collected to remonstrate against it; but his wife said, 'Let him go! I can get along without him, and raise something to feed the army in the bargain; and the country wants every man who can shoulder a musket.'" It was doubtless this extraordinary zeal of the Butler family which induced General Washington to give the toast, "The Butlers, and their five sons," at his own table, whilst surrounded by a large party of officers. This anecdote rests on the authority of the late General Findlay, of Cincinnati. A similar tribute of respect was paid to

this devoted house of soldiers by General Lafayette, in a letter now extant, and in the possession of a lady connected with them by marriage. Lafayette says, "*When I wanted a thing well done I ordered a Butler to do it.*"

From this retrospect it will be seen, that in all the wars of the country—in the revolutionary war, in the Indian war, in the last British war, and the present Mexican war—the blood of almost every Butler able to bear arms has been freely shed in the public cause. Major General WILLIAM O. BUTLER is now among the highest in the military service of his country; and he has attained this grade from the ranks, the position of a private being the only one he ever sought. At the opening of the war of 1812, he had just graduated in the Transylvania University, and was looking to the law as a profession. The surrender of Detroit and of the army by Hull aroused the patriotism and the valor of Kentucky; and young BUTLER, yet in his minority, was among the first to volunteer. He gave up his books and the enjoyments of the gay and polished society of Lexington, where he lived among a circle of fond and partial relations—the hope to gratify their ambition in shining at the bar, or in the political forum of the State—to join Captain Hart's company of infantry as a private soldier.

Before the march to join the northwestern army, he was elected a corporal. In this grade he marched to the relief of Fort Wayne, which was invested by hostile Indians. These were driven before the Kentucky volunteers to their towns on the Wabash, which were destroyed, and the troops then returned to the Miami of the lakes, where they made a winter encampment. Here an ensign's commission in the second regiment of United States infantry was tendered to the volunteer corporal, which he declined, unless permitted to remain with the northwestern army, which he had entered to share in the effort of the Kentucky militia to wipe out the disgrace of Hull's surrender by the recapture of Detroit. His proposition was assented to, and he received an ensign's appointment in the seveneenth infantry, then a part of the northwestern army, under the command of General Winchester. After enduring every privation in a winter encampment, in the wildernesses and frozen marshes of the lake country, awaiting in vain the expected support of additional forces, the Kentucky volunteers, led by Lewis, Allen, and Madison, with Wells's regiment, (17th U. S.,) advanced to encounter the force of British and Indians which defended Detroit. On leaving Kentucky, the volunteers had pledged themselves to drive the British invaders from our soil. These men and their leaders were held in such estimation at home that the expectation formed of them exceeded their promises; and these volunteers, though disappointed in every succor which they had reason to anticipate—wanting in provision, clothes, cannon, in everything—resolved, rather than lose reputation, to press on to the enterprise, and endeavor to draw on after them, by entering into action, the troops behind. It is not proper here to enter into explanations of the causes of the disaster at the River Raisin, the consequence of this movement, nor to give the particulars of the battle. The incidents which signalized the character of the subject of this memoir alone are proper here.

There were two battles at the River Raisin, one on the 18th, the other on the 22d of January. In the first, the whole body of Indian warriors, drawn

together from all the lake tribes, for the defence of Upper Canada against the approaching Kentuckians, were encountered. In moving to the attack of this formidable force of the fiercest, and bravest, and most expert warriors on the continent, a strong party of them were despatched from the line with which Ensign BUTLER advanced, running forward to reach a fence, as a cover from which to ply their rifles. BUTLER instantly proposed, and was permitted, to anticipate them. Calling upon some of the most alert and active men of the company, he ran directly to meet the Indians at the fence. He and his comrades outstripped the enemy, and getting possession of the fence, kept the advantage of the position for their advancing friends. This incident, of however little importance as to results, is worth remembrance in giving the traits of a young soldier's character. It is said that the hardiest veteran, at the opening of the fire in battle, feels, for the moment, somewhat appalled. And General Wolfe, one of the bravest of men, declared that the "horrid yell of the Indian strikes the boldest heart with affright." The stripling student, who, for the first time, beheld a field of battle on the snows of the River Raisin, presenting in bold relief long files of those terrible enemies, whose massacres had filled his native State with tales of horror, must have felt some stirring sensations. But the crack of the Indian rifle, and his savage yell, awoke in him the chivalric instincts of his nature; and the promptitude with which he communicated his enthusiasm to a few comrades around, and rushed forward to meet danger in its most appalling form, risking himself to save others, and to secure a triumph which he could scarcely hope to share, gave earnest of the military talent, the self-sacrificing courage, and the soldierly sympathies which have drawn to him the nation's esteem. The close of the battle of the 18th gave another instance in which these latter traits of Gen. BUTLER's character were still more strikingly illustrated. The Indians, driven from the defences around the town on the River Raisin, retired fighting into the thick woods beyond it. The contest of sharp-shooting from tree to tree was here continued—the Kentuckians pressing forward, and the Indians retreating—until night closed in, when the Kentuckians were recalled to the encampment in the village. The Indians advanced as their opposers withdrew, and kept up the fire until the Kentuckians emerged from the woods into the open ground. Just as the column to which Ensign BUTLER belonged reached the verge of the dark forest, the voice of a wounded man, who had been left some distance behind, was heard calling out most piteously for help. BUTLER induced three of his company to go back in the woods with him to bring him off. He was found, and they fought their way back—one of the men, Jeremiah Walker, receiving a shot, of which he subsequently died.

In the second sanguinary battle of the River Raisin, on the 22d of January, with the British and Indians, another act of self-devotion was performed by BUTLER. After the rout and massacre of the right wing, belonging to Wells's command, the whole force of the British and Indians was concentrated against the small body of troops under Major Madison, that maintained their ground within the picketed gardens. A double barn, commanding the plot of ground on which the Kentuckians stood, was approached on one side by the Indians, under the cover of an orchard and fence; the British, on the other side, being so posted as to com-

mand the space between it and the pickets. A party in the rear of the barn were discovered advancing to take possession of it. All saw the fatal consequences of the secure lodgment of the enemy at a place which would present every man within the pickets at close rifle-shot to the aim of their marksmen. Major Madison inquired if there was no one who would volunteer to run the gauntlet of the fire of the British and Indian lines, and put a torch to the combustibles within the barn, to save the remnant of the little army from sacrifice. BUTLER, without a moment's delay, took some blazing sticks from a fire at hand, leaped the pickets, and running at his utmost speed, thrust the fire into the straw within the barn. One who was an anxious spectator of the event we narrate, says, "that although volley upon volley was fired at him, BUTLER after making some steps on his way back, turned to see if the fire had taken, and not being satisfied, returned to the barn and set it in a blaze." As the conflagration grew, the enemy was seen retreating from the rear of the building, which they had entered at one end, as the flame ascended in the other. Soon after reaching the pickets in safety, amid the shouts of his friends, he was struck by a ball in his breast. Believing from the pain he felt that it had penetrated his chest, turning to Adjutant (now General) McCalla, one of his Lexington comrades, and pressing his hand to the spot, he said, "I fear this shot is mortal, but while I am able to move, I will do my duty." To the anxious inquiries of this friend, who met him soon afterward again, he opened his vest, with a smile, and showed him that the ball had spent itself on the thick wadding of his coat and on his breast bone. He suffered, however, for many weeks.

The little band within the pickets, which Winchester had surrendered, after being carried himself a prisoner into Proctor's camp, denied his powers. They continued to hold the enemy at bay until they were enabled to capitulate on honorable terms, which, nevertheless, Proctor shamefully violated, by leaving the sick and wounded who were unable to walk to the tomahawk of his allies. BUTLER, who was among the few of the wounded who escaped the massacre, was marched through Canada to Fort Niagara—suffering under his wound and every privation—oppressed with grief, hunger, fatigue, and the inclement cold of that desolate region. Even here he forgot himself, and his mind wandered back to the last night scene which he surveyed on the bloody shores of the River Raisin. He gave up the heroic part and became the school-boy again, and commemorated his sorrows for his lost friends in verse, like some passionate, heart-broken lover. These elegiac strains were never intended for any but the eye of mutual friends, whose sympathies, like his own, poured out tears with their plaints over the dead. We give some of these lines of his boyhood, to show that the heroic youth had a bosom not less kind than brave.

THE FIELD OF RAISIN.

The battle's o'er! the din is past,
Night's mantle on the field is cast;
The Indian yell is heard no more,
And silence broods o'er Erie's shore.
At this lone hour I go to tread
The field where valor vainly bled—
To raise the wounded warrior's crest,
Or warm with tears his icy breast;
To treasure up his last command,
And bear it to his native land.

It may one pulse of joy impart
 To a fond mother's bleeding heart;
 Or for a moment it may dry
 The tear-drop in the widow's eye.
 Vain hope, away! The widow ne'er
 Her warrior's dying wish shall hear.
 The passing zephyr bears no sigh,
 No wounded warrior meets the eye—
 Death is his sleep by Eric's wave,
 Of Raisin's snow we heap his grave!
 How many hopes lie murdered here—
 The mother's joy, the father's pride,
 The country's boast, the freeman's fear,
 In wilder'd havoc, side by side.
 Lend me, thou silent queen of night,
 Lend me awhile thy waning light,
 That I may see each well-loved form,
 That sunk beneath the morning storm.

These lines are introductory to what may be considered a succession of epitaphs on the personal friends whose bodies he found upon the field. It would extend the extract too far to insert them. We can only add the close of the poem, where he takes leave of a group of his young comrades in Hart's company, who had fallen together.

And here I see that youthful band,
 That loved to move at Hart's command;
 I saw them for the battle dressed,
 And still where danger thickest pressed,
 I marked their crimson plumage wave.
 How many filled this bloody grave!
 Their pillow and their winding-sheet
 The virgin snow—a shroud most meet!

But wherefore do I linger here?
 Why drop the unavailing tear?
 Where'er I turn, some youthful form,
 Like flow'et broken by the storm,
 Appeals to me in sad array,
 And bids me yet a moment stay,
 Till I could fondly lay me down
 And sleep with him on the cold ground.

For thee, thou dread and solemn plain,
 I ne'er shall look on thee again;
 And Spring, with her effacing showers,
 Shall come, and Summer's mantling flowers;
 And each succeeding Winter throw
 On thy red breast new robes of snow;
 Yet I will wear thee in my heart,
 All dark and gory as thou art.

Shortly after his return from Canada, Ensign BUTLER was promoted to a captaincy in the regiment to which he belonged. But as this promotion was irregular, being made over the heads of senior officers in that regiment, a captaincy was given him in the 44th, a new raised regiment. When free from parole, by exchange, in 1814, he instantly entered on active duty, with a company which he had recruited at Nashville, Tennessee. His regiment was ordered to join General Jackson in the South; but Captain BUTLER, finding its movements too tardy, pushed on, and effected that junction with his company alone. General Call, at that time an officer in Captain BUTLER's company, (since Governor of Florida,) in a letter addressed to Mr. Tanner, of Kentucky, presents, as an eyewitness, so graphically the share which Captain BUTLER had in the campaign which followed, that it may well supersede any narrative at second hand:

"TALLAHASSEE, April 3, 1814.

"Sir: I avail myself of the earliest leisure I have had since the receipt of your letter of the 18th of February, to give you a reply.

"A difference of political sentiments will not

induce me to withhold the narrative you have requested of the military services of Colonel WILLIAM O. BUTLER, during the late war with Great Britain, while attached to the army of the South. My intimate association with him, in camp, on the march, and in the field, has perhaps made me as well acquainted with his merits, as a gentleman and a soldier, as any other man living. And although we are now standing in opposite ranks, I cannot forget the days and nights we have stood side by side, facing the common enemy of our country, sharing the same fatigues, dangers, and privations, and participating in the same pleasures and enjoyments. The feelings and sympathies springing from such associations in the days of our youth can never be removed or impaired by a difference of opinion with regard to men or measures, when each may well believe the other equally sincere as himself, and where the most ardent desire of both is to sustain the honor, the happiness, and prosperity of our country.

"Soon after my appointment in the army of the United States, as a lieutenant, in the fall of 1814, I was ordered to join the company of Captain BUTLER, of the 44th regiment of infantry, then at Nashville, Tennessee. When I arrived and reported myself, I found the company under orders to join our regiment in the South. The march, mostly through an unsettled wilderness, was conducted by Captain BUTLER with his usual promptitude and energy; and, by forced and rapid movements, we arrived at Fort Montgomery, the headquarters of General Jackson, a short distance above the Florida line, just in time to follow our beloved general in his bold enterprise to drive the enemy from his strong position in a neutral territory. The vanguard of the army destined for the invasion of Louisiana, had made Pensacola its headquarters, and the British navy in the Gulf of Mexico had rendezvoused in that beautiful bay.

"The penetrating sagacity of General Jackson discovered the advantage of the position assumed by the British forces, and with a decision and energy which never faltered, he resolved to find his enemy, even under the flag of a neutral Power. This was done by a prompt and rapid march, surprising and cutting off all the advanced pickets, until we arrived within gunshot of the fort at Pensacola. The army of General Jackson was then so inconsiderable as to render a reinforcement of a single company, commanded by such an officer as Captain BUTLER, an important acquisition. And although there were several companies of regular troops ordered to march from Tennessee at the same time, Capt. BUTLER's, by his extraordinary energy and promptitude, was the only one which arrived in time to join this expedition. His company formed a part of the centre column of attack at Pensacola. The street we entered was defended by a battery in front, which fired on us incessantly, while several strong block-houses on our flanks discharged upon us small arms and artillery. But a gallant and rapid charge soon carried the guns in front, and the town immediately surrendered.

"In this fight Captain BUTLER led on his company with his usual intrepidity. He had one officer, Lieutenant Flournoy, severely wounded, and several non-commissioned officers and privates killed and wounded.

"From Pensacola, after the object of the expedition was completed, by another prompt and rapid movement, we arrived at New Orleans a few weeks before the appearance of the enemy.

"On the 23d of December the signal-gun announced the approach of the enemy. The previous night they had surprised and captured one of our pickets; had ascended a bayou, disembarked, and had taken possession of the left bank of the Mississippi, within six miles of New Orleans. The energy of every officer was put in requisition to concentrate our forces in time to meet the enemy. Captain BUTLER was one of the first to arrive at the General's quarters and ask instructions. They were received and promptly executed. Our regiment, stationed on the opposite side, was transported across the river. All the available forces of our army, not much exceeding fifteen hundred men, were concentrated in the city; and while the sun went down the line of battle was formed, and every officer took the station assigned him in the fight. The infantry formed on the open square, in front of the Cathedral, waiting in anxious expectation for the order to move. During this momentary pause, while the enemy was expected to enter the city, a scene of deep and thrilling interest was presented. Every gallery, porch, and window around the square were filled with the fair forms of beauty, in silent anxiety and alarm, waving their handkerchiefs to the gallant and devoted band which stood before them, prepared to die or defend them from the rude intrusion of a foreign soldiery. It was a scene calculated to awaken emotions never to be forgotten. It appealed to the chivalry and patriotism of every officer and soldier—it inspired every heart, and nerved every arm for battle. From this impressive scene the army marched to meet the enemy, and about eight o'clock at night they were surprised in their encampment, immediately on the banks of the Mississippi. Undiscovered, our line was formed in silence within a short distance of the enemy. A rapid charge was made into their camp, and a desperate conflict ensued. After a determined resistance the enemy gave way, but disputing every inch of ground we gained. In advancing over ditches and fences in the night, rendered still more dark by the smoke of the battle, much confusion necessarily ensued, and many officers became separated from their commands. It more than once occurred during the fight that some of our officers, through mistake, entered the enemy's lines, and the British officers in like manner entered ours. The meritorious officer in command of our regiment at the commencement of the battle lost his position in the darkness and confusion, and was unable to regain it until the action was over. In this manner, for a short time, the regiment was without a commander, and its movements were regulated by the platoon officers, which increased the confusion and irregularity of the advance. In this critical situation, and in the heat of the battle, Captain BUTLER, as the senior officer present, assumed command of the regiment, and led it on most gallantly to repeated and successful charges, until the fight ended in the complete rout of the enemy. We were still pressing on their rear, when an officer of the general's staff rode up and ordered the pursuit discontinued. Captain BUTLER urged its continuance, and expressed the confident belief of his ability to take many prisoners if permitted to advance. But the order was promptly repeated, under the well-founded apprehension that our troops might come in collision with each other, an event which had unhappily occurred at a previous hour of the fight. No corps on that field was more bravely led to battle than the regiment commanded by Captain BUTLER, and no

officer of any rank, save the Commander-in-chief, was entitled to higher credit for the achievement of that glorious night.

"A short time before the battle of the 8th of January, Captain BUTLER was detailed to command the guard in front of the encampment. A house standing near the bridge, in advance of his position, had been taken possession of by the light troops of the enemy, from whence they annoyed our guard. Captain BUTLER determined to dislodge them and burn the house. He accordingly marched to the attack at the head of his command, but the enemy retired before him. Seeing them retreat, he halted his guard, and advanced himself, accompanied by two or three men only, for the purpose of burning the house. It was an old frame building, weather-boarded, without ceiling or plaster in the inside, with a single door opening to the British camp. On entering the house, he found a soldier of the enemy concealed in one corner, whom he captured and sent to the rear with his men, remaining alone in the house. While he was in the act of kindling a fire, a detachment of the enemy, unperceived, occupied the only door. The first impulse was to force, with his single arm, a passage through them, but he was instantly seized in a violent manner by two or three stout fellows, who pushed him back against the wall with such a force as to burst off the weather-boarding from the wall, and he fell through the opening thus made. In an instant he recovered himself, and under a heavy fire from the enemy, he retreated until supported by the guard, which he immediately led on to the attack, drove the British light troops from their strong position, and burnt the house in the presence of the two armies.

"I witnessed on that field many deeds of daring courage, but none of which more excited my admiration than this.

"Captain BUTLER was soon after in the battle of the 8th of January, where he sustained his previously high and well-earned reputation for bravery and usefulness. But that battle, which, from its important results, has eclipsed those which preceded it, was but a slaughter of the enemy, with trivial loss on our part, and presenting few instances of individual distinction.

"Captain BUTLER received the brevet rank of major for his gallant services during that eventful campaign, and the reward of merit was never more worthily bestowed. Soon after the close of the war he was appointed aid-de-camp to General Jackson, in which station he remained until he retired from the army. Since that period I have seldom had the pleasure of meeting with my valued friend and companion in arms, and I know but little of his career in civil life. But in camp, his elevated principles, his intelligence, and generous feelings, won for him the respect and confidence of all who knew him; and where he is best known, I will venture to say, he is still most highly appreciated for every attribute which constitutes the gentleman and the soldier.

"I am, sir, very respectfully,

"R. K. CALL.

"MR. WILLIAM TANNER."

General Jackson's sense of the services of BUTLER, in this memorable campaign, was strongly expressed in the following letter to a member of the Kentucky Legislature:

"HERNITAGE, February 20, 1844.

"MY DEAR SIR: You ask me to give you my opinion of the military services of the then Captain, now Colonel, Wil-

LIAM O. BUTLER, of Kentucky, during the investment of New Orleans by the British forces in 1814 and 1815. I wish I had sufficient strength to speak fully of the merit and the services of Colonel BUTLER on that occasion; this strength I have not. Suffice it to say, that on all occasions he displayed that heroic chivalry and calmness of judgment in the midst of danger, which distinguish the valuable officer in the hour of battle. In a conspicuous manner were those noble qualities displayed by him on the night of the 23d December, 1814, and on the 8th of January, 1815, as well as at all times during the presence of the British army at New Orleans. In short, he was to be found at all points where duty called. I hazard nothing in saying, that should our country again be engaged in war during the active age of Colonel BUTLER, he would be one of the very best selections that could be made to command our army, and lead the Eagles of our country on to victory and renown. He has sufficient energy to assume all responsibility necessary to success, and for his country's good.

"ANDREW JACKSON."

General Jackson gave earlier proof of the high estimation in which he held the young soldier who had identified himself with his own glory at New Orleans. He made him his aid-de-camp in 1816; which station he retained on the peace establishment, with the rank of colonel. But, like his illustrious patron, he soon felt that military station and distinction had no charms for him, when unattended with the dangers, duties, and patriotic achievements of war. He resigned, therefore, even the association with his veteran chief, of which he was so proud, and retired in 1817 to private life. He resumed his study of the profession that was interrupted by the war, married, and settled down on his patrimonial possession at the confluence of the Kentucky and Ohio rivers, in the noiseless but arduous vocations of civil life. The abode which he had chosen made it peculiarly so with him. The region around him was wild and romantic, sparsely settled, and by pastoral people. There are no populous towns. The high, rolling, and yet rich lands—the precipitous cliffs of the Kentucky, of Eagle, Savern, and other tributaries which pour into it near the mouth—make this section of the State still, to some extent, a wilderness of thickets—of the tangled pea-vine, the grape-vine, and nut-bearing trees, which rendered all Kentucky, until the intrusion of the whites, one great Indian park. The whole luxuriant domain was preserved by the Indians as a pasture for buffalo, deer, elk, and other animals—their enjoyment alike as a chase and a subsistence—by excluding every tribe from fixing a habitation in it. Its name consecrated it as the dark and bloody ground; and war pursued every foot that trod it. In the midst of this region, in April, 1791, WILLIAM O. BUTLER was born, in Jessamine county, on the Kentucky river. His father had married in Lexington, soon after his arrival in Kentucky, 1782, Miss Hawkins, a sister-in-law of Colonel Todd, who commanded and perished in the battle of the Blue-Licks. Following the instincts of his family, which seemed ever to court danger, Gen. Pierce Butler, as neighborhood encroached around him, removed, not long after the birth of his son William, to the mouth of the Kentucky river. Through this section the Indian war-path into the heart of Kentucky passed. Until the peace of 1794, there was scarcely a day that some hostile savage did not prowl through the tangled forests, and the labyrinths of hills, streams, and cliffs, which adapted this region to their lurking warfare. From it they emerged when they made their last formidable incursion, and pushed their foray to the environs of Frankfort, the capital of the State. Gen. Pierce Butler had on one side of him the Ohio, on the further shore of which the savage hordes still

held the mastery, and on the other the romantic region through which they hunted and pressed the war enterprises. And here, amid the scenes of frontier warfare, his son William had that spirit which has animated him through life, educated by the legends of the Indian-fighting hunters of Kentucky.

To the feelings and taste inspired by the peculiarities of the place and circumstances adverted to must be attributed the return of Colonel BUTLER to his father's home, to enter on his profession as a lawyer. There were no great causes or rich clients to attract him—no dense population to lift him to the political honors of the State. The eloquence and learning, the industry and integrity which he gave to adjust the controversies of Gallatin and the surrounding counties would have crowned him with wealth and professional distinction if exhibited at Louisville or Lexington. But he coveted neither. Independence, the affections of his early associates, the love of a family circle, and the charm which the recollection of a happy boyhood gave to the scenes in which he was reared, were all he sought. And he found them all in the romantic dells and woodland heights of the Kentucky, and on the sides of the far-spreading, gently-flowing, beautiful Ohio. The feeling which his sincere and sensitive nature had imbibed here was as strong as that of the Switzer for his bright lakes, lofty mountains, and deep valleys. The wild airs of the boat horn, which have resounded for so many years from arks descending the Ohio and Kentucky, floating along the current and recurring in echoes from the hollows of the hills, like its eddies, became as dear to him as the famous *Rans de Vache* to the native of Switzerland. We insert, as characteristic alike of the poetical talent and temperament of BUTLER, some verses which the sound of this rude instrument evoked when he returned home, resigning with rapture "the ear-piercing life and spirit-stirring drum" for the wooden horn, which can only compass in its simple melody such airs as that to which Burns has set his beautiful words—

When wild war's deadly blast was blown,
And gentle peace returning,
Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning;
I left the lines and tented field.

The music of this song made the burden of the "Boatman's Horn," and always announced the approaching ark to the river villages.

The sentiments of the poet, as well as the sweet and deep tones which wafted the plaintive air over the wide expanse of the Ohio, may have contributed to awaken the feeling which pervades these lines.

THE BOAT HORN.

O, boatman! wind that horn again,
For never did the list'ning air
Upon its lambent bosom hear
So wild, so soft, so sweet a strain.
What though thy notes are sad and few,
By every simple boatman blown?
Yet is each pulse to nature true,
And melody in every tone.
How oft, in boyhood's jocular days,
Unmindful of the lapsing hours,
I've loitered on my homeward way
By wild Ohio's brink of flowers,
While some lone boatman, from the deck,
Poured his soft numbers to that tide,

As if to charm from storm and wreck
 The boat where all his fortunes ride!
 Delighted Nature drank the sound,
 Enchanted—Echo bore it round
 In whispers soft, and softer still,
 From hill to plain, and plain to hill,
 Till e'en the thoughtless, frolic boy,
 Etate with hope, and wild with joy,
 Who gambled by the river's side,
 And sported with the fretting tide,
 Feels something new pervade his breast,
 Chain his light step, repress his jest,
 Bends o'er the flood his eager ear
 To catch the sounds far off, yet dear—
 Drinks the sweet draught, but knows not why
 The tear of rapture fills his eye.
 And can he now, to manhood grown,
 Tell why those notes, simple and lone,
 As on the ravished ear they fell,
 Bind every sense in magic spell?
 There is a tide of feeling given
 To all on earth, its fountain Heaven:
 Beginning with the dewy flower,
 Just oped in Flora's vernal bower—
 Rising creation's orders through
 With louder murmur, brighter hue:
 That *tide* is sympathy! its ebb and flow
 Give life its hues of joy and woe:
 Music the master-spirit that can move
 Its waves to war, or lull them into love—
 Can cheer the sinking sailor mid the wave,
 And bid the soldier on! nor fear the grave—
 Inspire the fainting pilgrim on his road,
 And elevate his soul to claim his God.
 Then, boatman! wind that horn again!
 Though much of sorrow mark its strain,
 Yet are its notes to sorrow dear:
 What though they wake fond memory's tear?
 Tears are sad memory's sacred feast,
 And rapture oft her chosen guest.

This retirement, which may almost be considered seclusion, was enjoyed by Colonel BUTLER nearly twenty-five years, when he was called out by the Democratic party to redeem by his personal popularity the Congressional district in which he lived. It was supposed that no one else could save it from the Whigs. Like all the rest of his family, none of whom had made their military service a passport to the honors and emoluments of civil stations, he was averse to relinquish the attitude he occupied to enter on a party struggle. The importunity of friends prevailed; and he was elected to two successive terms in Congress, absolutely refusing to be a candidate a third time. He spoke seldom in Congress; but in two or three fine speeches which appear in the debates, a power will readily be detected which could not have failed to conduct to the highest distinction in that body. Taste, judgment, and eloquence, characterized all his efforts in Congress. A fine manner, an agreeable voice, and the high consideration accorded to him by the members of all parties, gave him, what it is the good fortune of few to obtain, an attentive and gratified audience.

In 1844, the same experiment was made with BUTLER's popularity to carry the State for the Democracy, as had succeeded in his Congressional district. He was nominated as the Democratic candidate for Governor by the 8th of January convention; and there is good ground to believe

that he would have been chosen over his estimable Whig competitor, Governor Owsley, but for the universal conviction throughout the State that the defeat of Mr. Clay's party, by the choice of a Democratic Governor in August, would have operated to injure Mr. Clay's prospects throughout the Union, in the Presidential election which followed immediately after in November. With Mr. Clay's popularity, and the activity of all his friends—with the State pride so long exalted by the aspiration of giving a President to the Union—more eagerly than ever enlisted against the Democracy, Colonel BUTLER diminished the Whig majority from twenty thousand to less than five thousand.

The late military events with which Major General BUTLER has been connected—in consequence of his elevation to that grade in 1846, with the view to the command of the volunteers raised to support General Taylor in his invasion of Mexico—are so well known to the country, that minute recital is not necessary. He acted a very conspicuous part in the severe conflict at Monterey, and had, as second in command under General Taylor, his full share in the arduous duties and responsibilities incurred in that important movement. The narrative of Major Thomas, senior Assistant Adjutant General of the army in Mexico, and hence assigned by General Taylor to the staff of General BUTLER, reports so plainly and modestly the part which General BUTLER performed in subjecting the city, that it may well stand for history. This passage is taken from it: "The army arrived at their camp, in the vicinity of Monterey, about noon, September 19th. That afternoon, the General endeavored by personal observation to get information of the enemy's position. He, like General Taylor, saw the importance of gaining the road to Saltillo, and fully favored the movement of General Worth's division to turn their left, &c. Worth marched, Sunday, September 20th, for this purpose, thus leaving Twigg's and Butler's divisions with General Taylor. General Butler was also in favor of throwing his division across the St. John's river, and approaching the town from the east, which was at first determined upon. This was changed, as it would leave but one, and perhaps the smallest division, to guard the camp, and attack in front. The 20th, the General also reconnoitered the enemy's position. Early the morning of the 21st, the force was ordered out to create a diversion in favor of Worth, that he might gain his position; and before our division came within long range of the enemy's principal battery, the foot of Twigg's division had been ordered down to the northeast side of the town, to make an armed reconnaissance of the advanced battery, and to take it if it could be done without great loss. The volunteer division was scarcely formed in rear of our howitzer and mortar battery, established the night previous under cover of a rise of ground, before the infantry sent down to the northeast side of the town became closely and hotly engaged, the batteries of that division were sent down, and we were then ordered to support the attack. Leaving the Kentucky regiment to support the mortar and howitzer battery, the General rapidly put in march, by a flank movement, the other three regiments, moving for some one-and-a-half or two miles under a heavy fire of round shot. As further ordered, the Ohio regiment was detached from Quitman's brigade, and led by the General (at this time accompanied by General Taylor) into the town. Quitman carried

his brigade directly on the battery first attacked, and gallantly carried it. Before this, however, as we entered the suburbs, the chief engineer came up and advised us to withdraw, as the object of the attack had failed, and if we moved on we must meet with great loss. The General was loath to fall back without consulting with General Taylor, which he did do—the General being but a short distance off. As we were withdrawing, news came that Quitman had carried the battery, and General Butler led the Ohio regiment back to the town at a different point. In the street we became exposed to a line of batteries on the opposite side of a small stream, and also from a *tête de pont* (bridge-head) which enfiladed us. Our men fell rapidly as we moved up the street, to get a position to charge the battery across the stream. Coming to a cross-street, the General reconnoitered the position, and determining to charge from that point, sent me back a short distance to stop the firing, and advance the regiment with the bayonet. I had just left him, when he was struck in the leg, being on foot, and was obliged to leave the field."

"On entering the town, the General and his troops became at once hotly engaged at short musket range. He had to make his reconnoissances under heavy fire. This he did unflinchingly, and by exposing his person—on one occasion passing through a large gateway into a yard, which was entirely open to the enemy. When he was wounded, at the intersection of the two streets, he was exposed to a cross-fire of musketry and grape."

"In battle the General's bearing was truly that of a soldier; and those under him felt the influence of his presence. He had the entire confidence of his men."

The narrative of Major Thomas continues:

"When Gen. Taylor went on his expedition to Victoria, in December, he placed General BUTLER in command of the troops left on the Rio Grande, and at the stations from the river on to Saltillo—Worth's small division of regulars being at the latter place. General Wool's column had by this time reached Parras, one hundred or more miles west of Saltillo. General Butler had so far recovered from his wound as to walk a little, and take exercise on horseback, though with pain to his limb. One night, (about the 19th December,) an express came from General Worth at Saltillo, stating that the Mexican forces were advancing in large numbers from San Luis de Potosi, and that he expected to be attacked in two days. His division, all told, did not exceed fifteen hundred men, if so many, and he asked reinforcements. The General remained up during the balance of the night, sent off the necessary couriers to the rear for reinforcements, and had the 1st Kentucky and the 1st Ohio foot, then encamped three miles from town, in the place by daylight; and these two regiments, with Webster's battery, were encamped that night ten miles on the road to Saltillo. This promptness enabled the General to make his second day's march of twenty-two miles in good season, and to hold the celebrated pass of Los Muertos,

and check the enemy should he have attacked General Worth on that day, and obliged him to evacuate the town. Whilst on the next, and last day's march, the General received notice that the reported advance of the enemy was untrue. Arriving at the camp-ground, the General suffered intense pain from his wound, and slept not during the night. This journey, over a rugged, mountainous road, and the exercise he took in examining the country for twenty miles in advance of Saltillo, caused the great increase of pain now experienced."

The Major's account then goes on to relate General BUTLER's proceedings while in command of all the forces, after the junction of Generals Worth and Wool—his dispositions to meet the threatened attack of Santa Anna—the defences created by him at Saltillo, and used during the attack at Buena Vista in dispersing Mifson's forces—his just treatment of the people of Saltillo, with the prudent and effectual precautions taken to make them passive in the event of Santa Anna's approach. It concludes by stating that all apprehensions of Santa Anna's advance subsiding, General BUTLER returned to meet General Taylor at Monterey, to report the condition of affairs; and the latter, having taken the command at Saltillo, transmitted a leave of absence to General BUTLER, to afford opportunity for the cure of his wound.

This paper affords evidence of the kind feeling which subsisted between the two Generals during the campaign, and this sentiment was strongly evinced by General BUTLER, on his arrival in Washington, where he spoke in the most exalted terms of the leader under whom he served.

In person General BUTLER is tall, straight, and handsomely formed, exceedingly active and alert. His mien is inviting, his manners graceful, his gait and air military, his countenance frank and pleasing, the outline of his features of the aquiline cast—thin and pointed in expression,—the general contour of his head is Roman.

The character of General BUTLER in private life is in fine keeping with that exhibited in his public career. In the domestic circle, care, kindness, assiduous activity in anticipating the wants of all around him—readiness to forego his own gratifications to gratify others, have become habits growing out of his affections. His love makes perpetual sunshine at his home. Among his neighbors, liberality, affability, and active sympathy, mark his social intercourse, and unbending integrity and justice all his dealings. His home is one of unpretending simplicity. It is too much the habit in Kentucky, with stern and fierce men, to carry their personal and political ends with a high hand. General BUTLER, with all the masculine strength, courage, and reputation to give success to attempts of this sort, never evinced the slightest disposition to indulge the power, whilst his well-known firmness always forbade such attempts on him. His life has been one of peace with all men, except the enemies of his country.

WASHINGTON, June, 1848.

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